

SouthWest Sage

November 2009

www.southwestwriters.com

Kathleen Cherry SWW Storyteller of the Year

By Ruth Friesen

Lunch hour for Kathleen Cherry, winner of SouthWest Writers' 2009 Storyteller Award with her historical romance *To Love a Viscount*, includes stolen moments to write. "That may explain why I've been writing for almost 12 years," she says. Working full time as a psychological counselor in several elementary schools in Kiti-mat, British Columbia, she seeks light relief in her writing from the sometimes heartrending job.

Her inspiration is the children with whom she works. "I ask them to hold onto their dreams, to believe in themselves and rise above all manner of rejection: poor grades, social isolation and family issues. Holding on to what sometimes seems an impossible dream is my way of having integrity and 'walking the talk'."

Writing historical romance is part of that dream for her. "I love to read historical romance. Writing it is fun, rather like a grown-up's version of playing Barbies without annoying Velcro clothes (press-studs in my day)." She knows about play: her 12-year-old is a "budding gymnast, and the 7-year-old is an accomplished drama queen."

Kathleen won first place in SouthWest Writers' 2008 Annual Contest in the Middle Grade or Young Adult short story category with her story "Breaking the Code." She has used SWW's critique service "which I found to be very useful in my hunt for reliable feedback." She has also won several

contests through chapters in the Romance Writers Association and "learned a tremendous amount from the feedback I have received." She also finalized in a children's literature competition that is held annually by the Canadian Writers Union. A few of her personal essays and articles have made it into print but she has not had a book published.



She doesn't yet have an agent but is "on the prowl and hope that winning this contest may catch someone's attention and get me in the door." SWW Storyteller Judge Elizabeth Evans, Reece Halsey, NY had this to say about Kathleen's novel: "The first twenty pages of *To Love a Viscount* crackle with tight, witty dialogue, vivid historical details, and a marvelous sense of fun and adventure. What I loved most about these pages were their sense of movement and personal-

ity.....With the introduction of Rilla Gibson, I met one of the more engaging heroines I've seen in some time.....If the opening pages of a novel are to serve as a kind of roadmap for the rest of the book, this novel will transcend genre..... to become a truly excellent novel, period."

"Thank you to everyone involved in this contest. I only wish I could have attended the banquet," Kathleen e-mailed to SWW.

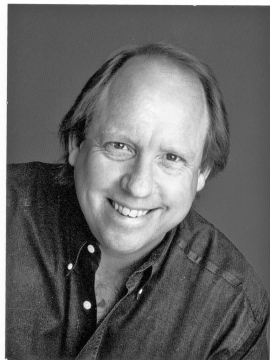
New SWW Officers

At SouthWest Writer's annual meeting on October 3, officers for 2010 were elected. They are Melody Groves, President, Robert Spiegel, Vice President, and Larry Greenly, Secretary. Discussions are underway with a candidate for the position of Treasurer. The nominee will be confirmed by the board of directors at a regularly scheduled board meeting.



A New Mission for SWW: Helping Members Sell Their Books

Our long-term goal at SouthWest Writers is to help our members become better writers and to help them get published. Those two goals have been with us since the very beginning, more than 25 years.



President

Rob Spiegel

Lately, though, we have one additional goal: to help our members figure out ways to sell their book once they are published. This is a relatively new goal that arose because of two recent changes in the publishing industry:

1. Publishers have outsourced the marketing of their book to authors
2. Print-on-demand has made it easier to self-publish

Because of these two trends, more and more of our members need to learn how to market their books to readers in addition to learning how to write and how to sell to publishers.

In response to this recent need, SWW started to offer instruction on how to promote your books and yourself. We had a regular program on how to use Twitter in September. In December we'll have a presentation on using social networking sites to promote your books.

This subject has become hot with our classes as well. Last month, Kirt Hickman presented a class on the Secrets to a Successful Book Signing, and Melody Groves gave a class on Writing Your Own Biography. Later this month, Loretta Hall will present a class on Do-It-Yourself Websites.

All of those classes and programs are designed to help SWW members reach readers. It's a new mission for SWW. Let us know how we're doing and let us know what else you need to learn in order to become a successful writer.

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*Life shrinks or
expands in
proportion to one's
courage.
Anais Nin*

SouthWest Sage Advertising Rates

Worldwide Internet Circulation

The SWW website receives hundreds of thousands of page requests every month.

Business card size: \$16

1/8 page: \$24

1/4 page: \$36

1/3 page: \$45

1/2 page: \$75

15% discount for 3 mos.

20% discount for 6 mos.

Deadline: 1st of each month for the following month.

Payment due with camera-ready ad copy.

Annual Membership in SouthWest Writers

Individual: \$60 (\$100 for 2 years), Two people \$50 each,

Student over 18: \$40, Under 18: \$25

Requires proof of student status

Outside U. S.: \$65, Lifetime Membership: \$750

Download the Sage from www.southwestwriters.com

Join us first Saturday: 10 AM-Noon: Third Tuesday: 7-9 PM

**New Life Presbyterian Church, 5540 Eubank NE,
Albuquerque, New Mexico**



SouthWest Sage

*Published monthly by the Board of Directors of
SouthWest Writers, a nonprofit, tax-exempt
501(c)(3) organization.
Subscription is a benefit of membership.*

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Two-Minute Tax Warning

By Fred A. Aiken

The two-minute warning in football signals that the time to make the winning play is quickly running out. Consider this your Two-Minute Warning for tax purposes. If you want to deduct your writing expenses from your 2009 income, you must act now to ensure that you have the necessary records to be able to take the deduction.

Writing is a business. To be considered as a writer, one simply declares oneself to be a writer by filling out Schedule C on their tax return. By self-declaration, a writer establishes herself/himself as a person operating a part-time, sole-proprietorship engaged in the business of writing for profit. A writer must materially participate in her/his business and all of the money invested in the business must be "at risk." A writing business operates on the cash basis (income as received and expenses when paid) and carries no inventory.

According to Harlan Ellison, "Anybody can become a writer, but the trick is to STAY a writer." The Internal Revenue Service will audit your return. When they do, they are looking to see whether there is more evidence that you are actively engaged in the business of writing than there is evidence that you are not (preponderance of evidence rule). If your income exceeds your expenses, then you have little to worry about; even hobbyists can deduct all expenses to the extent of their income. Only writers actively engaged in the business of writing are entitled to the privilege of deducting their excess business losses from their other income.

Most businesses have common characteristics. They keep detailed accounting records. The business owner has a good knowledge of the business sector in which the business operates. The business owner belongs to professional associations (SouthWest Writers, for example). And, the business owner has a written business plan on how her/his business will be operated.

As a professional writer, use these final two months of 2009 to gather documentation to substantiate your writing income and expenses. Income is any money that is generated by your writing activity, including contest prizes. Common expenses include dues to professional organizations such as SWW, paper, pens/pencils, printer ink, telephone expenses for interviews, postage, professional development activities (such as SWW workshops, conferences and classes), reference books, mileage for business purposes, etc. If a business purpose can be established, then the expense may be deducted. The list is endless. It is up to you to establish the business purpose of the deduction. I personally avoid taking any deductions for a home office and will urge extreme caution in taking deductions for "research travel."

A writer prepares manuscripts and sends those manuscripts to persons who are in a position to pay the writer for the right to publish the manuscript. Publishing is a different business from writing. If you self-publish, make sure that you separate your writing expenses from your publishing expenses and file separate Schedule C forms for each business.

Smile as you file your 2009 tax return. Many happy deductions to you in 2009 and future years.

Fred A. Aiken has an MBA from Cleveland State University and has taken graduate level course-work on Federal Income Tax. A member of SWW since 1996, he writes spiritual/inspirational and non-fiction articles as well as mystery and science fiction/fantasy stories and novels.

Revising Fiction: Perfect Your Plot

by Kirt Hickman

Some writers determine at least the skeleton of their plot before they write their first draft. Others begin with a character, a goal, and an obstacle and then let the plot develop from these as they write. Whichever way your plot evolves, at some point you'll have to answer this question: Is it any good? To find out, look for the following elements.

Three-Act Structure: One way or another, every story must have a beginning, a middle, and an end. You must introduce one or more characters and the circumstances surrounding the action. You must have conflict. And you must resolve the conflict. Together, these make up the three-act structure:

ACT I	=	Beginning	=	Setup
ACT II	=	Middle	=	Conflict
ACT III	=	End	=	Resolution

Always begin with a character, preferably a character the reader cares about. Give your character a goal. Make the goal personal and the stakes high. The higher the stakes, the stronger the plot.

Place a difficult obstacle between your hero and his goal. Someone or something must stand in your hero's way. This provides the source of conflict.

Finally, whether the hero achieves his goal or not, resolve the conflict in a decisive and satisfying manner. And—this is important—your hero must take the action most responsible for resolving the central conflict. In other words: Don't let some other character solve your hero's problem for him.

Cause and Effect: Never lose the ever-important thread of cause and effect. Every event in your story must be the direct result of a character's actions (which must be driven by the character's motivations and objectives) or an earlier event.

Any event that doesn't stem from one of these causes constitutes author manipulation, which your reader will recognize. At best, the reader won't believe your story. At worst, he'll resent and distrust you for it. Either way, he won't read your book.

Life Change: Your hero must go through a permanent, life-altering change during the story. If he doesn't, the stakes are either not high enough or not personal enough.

Mythic Structure: How should you set up the conflict and how should it play out? The answer lies in the mythic structure. Joseph Campbell introduced the mythic structure in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. Christopher Vogler presents the same structure in *The Writer's Journey—Mythic Structure for Storytellers*. James Scott Bell mentions it in *Plot &*

Structure. Each presents it differently, but it's all the same structure.

Why are so many authors teaching mythic structure? Simple. It works. Ever since storytelling became an art form, the stories that have endured, generation after generation, have exhibited this structure.

Ordinary life: Your story should pull the hero away from his ordinary life. Before it does, however, you must show the reader what that life is like. This will help the reader understand the impact the crisis will have on that life and on the hero. Show the reader what kind of person your hero is. Give her a moment to connect with him in a setting she can understand and relate to. Give her a reason to care about your hero.

Story starting point: Something happens to change the course of your hero's life. It may be something subtle or something catastrophic. Either way, it signals to the hero, and to the reader, that this is no ordinary day. The story's starting point should occur as early in the book as possible.

Heeding the call: Your hero makes a decision or a decision is made for him. Either way, he leaves his ordinary life to embark upon whatever challenge the plot presents to him. After all, what kind of hero would he be if he didn't? Nevertheless, he should hesitate to jump in. If the decision to take the challenge is easy for him, the challenge isn't daunting enough.

Allies and enemies: The hero leaves his normal life and enters unfamiliar territory. He discovers who his allies and enemies are and begins to learn the rules of his new world, new relationship, new case—whatever his new situation may be.

Dark moment: Here, your hero faces his biggest challenge, his most difficult battle. Test him to his limits before allowing him to triumph. Make it seem as though he must lose, as though there's no way out.

Climax: The hero overcomes the final challenge in a second life-or-death struggle. It looks once more as though the villain must win.

Permanence of the character's change: Just as your story must have a life-altering turning point for the hero, you must show that his change is permanent.

If your plot doesn't include all these elements. Ask yourself "What if..." questions to spur ideas for incorporating any missing elements.

Kirt Hickman, author of Worlds Asunder, a science-fiction conspiracy thriller, and the 2009 self-editing guide Revising Fiction, teaches "Revising Fiction" courses through SouthWest Writers.

The ABCs of Kids' Nonfiction Books

By Shirley Raye Redmond

Some years ago, I ran across a copy of Joyce Milton's nonfiction early reader, *Dinosaur Days*. I was amazed to learn that it has sold more than one million copies and gone into more than 60 printings since it was first published by Random House in 1985. Milton's little book is even mentioned in Marc McCutcheon's, *Damn! Why Didn't I Write That? How Ordinary People Are Raking in \$100,000 or more Writing Nonfiction Books & How You Can Too*.

Very few children's picture books or middle grade novels can boast the same success. In fact, bookstore owners have told me that if a fictional children's book hasn't "made it big" within six to nine months of its appearance on the shelves, then it won't. Many don't even earn back the advance the publisher paid the author. I learned this firsthand when I sold my first juvenile novel, *Grampa and the Ghost* (Avon's Camelot Books) to an editor I met at an SWW conference many years ago. The title was first released in paperback and later became a hard-cover Weekly Reader selection. Still, it disappeared from stores in less than a year. The royalties I earned all went back to the publisher to reimburse them for my advance.



On the other hand, my first nonfiction titles, *Lewis & Clark: a Prairie Dog for the President* and *Tentacles! Tales of the Giant Squid* (both Random House) have both sold over 170,000 copies, generating thousands of dollars in royalties. The Lewis & Clark title even became a Children's Book of the Month Club selection. Is there a lesson here? Yes! If you want to break into the children's book market, start with nonfiction. If you've already sold your first children's picture book or middle grade novel, but want to generate more writing income, try your hand at nonfiction books for kids.

Why? Because as one top editor has said, "We always have a need for true stories for kids." In business terms, the nonfiction book market for children is seldom "soft." There are also dozens of publishing houses, such as Thomson Gale and Mitchell Lane, that specialize in nonfiction books for kids. They are always looking for experienced writers—particularly ones willing to take on work-for-hire projects.

Here's some more good news: you don't have to be an expert with a Ph.D. on the subject you want to write about. Most publishing houses have fact checkers to edit the manuscript. They will ask for your list of sources, so take careful notes.

Larger houses hire professionals in the field to vet or exam-

ine the material for accuracy. Dr. Clyde Roper, a leading expert on giant squid, vetted my manuscript about this mysterious sea creature. He even provided photos for the book. Such expert examination gives a nonfiction children's book marketable clout. I'm always delighted to see my title for sale in aquarium bookstores across the country, and this past summer, the book made a recommended reading list put out by a national teachers' organization to coincide with the hit movie *Night at the Museum: Battle of the Smithsonian*.

Don't know what to write about? Start with topics that fascinate you. Then think back to the subjects that fascinated you as a kid. Trains, pioneers, World War II messenger pigeons, fossils? Don't make the mistake of dismissing a subject because you think all the "good ones have already been taken." Here's where creative thinking separates the published from the unpublished. Don't be daunted by the misconception that you'll be researching for years to write one book. Not so. Most of my nonfiction children's book manuscripts average 900 words in length. My longest is only 25,000 words.

I confess: I enjoy "the thrill of the chase." Research can be fun, particularly when researching a topic one's keen about. Like to travel? Go to the place you're writing about. I went to Iceland to get up close and personal with Atlantic puffins. Like reading? Go to the library and find grown-up books on your topic. Pay attention to the authors' acknowledgements and authors' notes. Photocopy the bibliographies and accumulate more information than you ever plan to use. As your research folder fills up, narrow your topic to the aspect that interests you the most, and simplify what you've learned so a child can understand it.

Years ago, an editor at Random House lamented that most writers don't want to write nonfiction for children because "it isn't glamorous." Perhaps it isn't. But for the past several years, I have found it to be challenging and enjoyable, as well as profitable. Maybe you will too.

Shirley Raye Redmond is the awarding winning author of nearly 2 dozen books, including *The Jersey Devil*. Visit her website at www.readshirleyraye.com

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Program Location: New Life Presbyterian Church, 5540 Eubank NE, Albuquerque

Saturday, November 7
10:00 a.m. to noon

Mark David Gerson

The Heartful Art of Revision:
An Intuitive Approach to Editing

Your first draft's done. You now have some sense of the story and, if it's fiction, its characters. But it's still rough and unpolished. It still needs work to get it into publishable form. Now what? Instead of going at your manuscript with a hatchet, why not consider a softer approach to editing? Let Mark David help you view revision in a new way, one that respects both your work and you as its creator.

Mark David Gerson has taught and coached writing as a creative and spiritual pursuit for more than 15 years in the U.S. and Canada. Author of two award-winning books, *The Voice of the Muse: Answering the Call to Write* and *The MoonQuest*, Mark David has also recorded *The Voice of the Muse Companion: Guided Meditations for Writers*. Mark David is an editor, project consultant and script analyst and a popular speaker on topics related to creativity and spirituality. His screenplay adaptation of *The MoonQuest* is now in active development with Anvil Springs Entertainment.

Tuesday, November 17
7:00 pm to 9:00 pm

Sandra Toro

The Elements of a Blockbuster

Would you like to be the next Dan Brown, Margaret Mitchell or J. K. Rowling? Isn't that the fantasy every one of us nourishes in our heart of hearts? What do editors mean when they say they are looking for a fresh voice? What does it take for an unknown author to get on the *New York Times* Bestseller list?

Sandra Toro, a former Chief Executive Officer of three pharmaceutical companies--they also search for blockbusters--and a published novelist and teacher of creative writing will discuss blockbuster novels, their intersection with politics and world affairs, and your aspirations to become one of these world-famous authors. In addition to being a novelist and free lance writer, Sandra has also been a political appointee in the Carter and Clinton Administrations in Washington, D. C., and was the Director of Women's Activities in the presidential campaign of Vice President Hubert Humphrey.



SouthWest Writers Holiday Potluck

Saturday, December 5

8:30 AM before the regular meeting

Bring your appetites and food to share

Saturday, December 5
10:00 a.m. to noon

Amy Lahti

A Press Release is Not Enough:
Selling Your Book to Readers in the Age of Facebook

Do you have a self-published book that you'd like to sell more copies of? Are you confused why you can't seem to get local bookstores interested in holding events for your book? Have you seen other authors use Facebook, Twitter, YouTube or other online resources to get attention (and sales) for their books? These days, simply publishing a book and putting it "out there" isn't enough. There are many free and easy-to-use tools at your disposal that can help generate interest in your book - but you have to use them to see results. We will discuss different avenues for promoting self-published books, what's reasonable to expect and what's not, using the web for promotion, and also what to think about as you write and design your next book.

Amy Lahti is a marketing and communications professional with over 10 years of experience in public relations, Web marketing, social networking, and promotion. She has worked for large corporations like PNM and small businesses like Bookworks. Her insights into book promotion from the bookseller's side will help you make good decisions about marketing your books.



*It is with words as with
sunbeams—the more they are
condensed, the deeper they burn.*

Robert Southey

Meeting

Tuesday, January 3
7:00 pm to 9:00 pm

Loretta Hall

Your First Customer: Selling Your Book to a Publisher

You dream of hordes of readers ordering your book from Amazon.com or happily discovering copies on the shelf at their local bookstore. But that's not going to happen unless you can sell your manuscript to a publisher first. (Even if you decide to self-publish, you'd better evaluate your book like a publisher would!) Loretta will explain the steps for selling to your first, and most important, customer.

Loretta Hall has four nonfiction books in print and is writing the next one. The lessons she has learned from experiences with several publishers will give you a head start with your sales efforts. Although her personal experience is in the nonfiction realm, her tips for thinking like a publisher can be useful to novelists as well. Loretta served on the SouthWest Writers board for four years and received the 2007 Parris Award.



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Bill Fones
Richard Runkowski
John Kennedy
Jim Shannon
Tess K. Reis
E. Sarah Lawrence
Luann Reynolds
Joy Silha
John Duncan

Class

Who's On First?

Point of View: Assignments and Peer Critique

Betsy James

Eight weeks: Oct 14, 21, 28; Nov 4, 11, 18; Dec 2, 9
Wednesday evenings 6:30-9:00pm

SouthWest Writers Conference Room
3721 Morris NE, Ste A
(northwest corner of Comanche and Morris).

\$150 members, \$170 non-members
Class Limited to 10 Students

Before whose eyes—and prejudice, and soul—should a story unfold? Point-of-view—"POV"—is a powerful tool. The intimacy of First Person, the disciplined restrictions of Limited Third, the all-seeing eye of Omniscient—these and other choices set camera angles, define and deepen character, impose limits and offer dynamic opportunities. And POV is political: in this era of changing worldviews, what is it like to see through the eyes of the Other—perhaps even a non-human Other?

Through short weekly assignments we will write to aspects of POV, then bring our work into the conversation of critique. Clear, respectful peer critique will be taught and modeled; graduates will be competent to form their own critique group or enrich an existing one. Assignments will be appropriate to novel or short story, realistic or speculative fiction, adult or juvenile. Come prepared to work hard.

Betsy James is the author of sixteen books for young adults and children. Her most recent speculative fiction, *Listening at the Gate* (Atheneum 2006), is a James Tiptree Award Honor Book and a New York Public Library Best Book for the Teen Age. Visit her on the web at www.betsyjames.com.

When good and evil intertwine,
taking one means accepting the other

DARK KNOWLEDGE
by Keith Pyeatt

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Workshops

WHAT I LEARNED FROM NANCY DREW: TOOLS FOR FAST-PACED PLOTTING

Chris Eboch

Saturday, November 21, 1:00-4:30 pm

\$39/members; \$49/non-members, Limit: 14 students
SouthWest Writers Conference Room
3721 Morris NE, Ste A (NW corner of Comanche and Morris)

Nancy Drew's adventures have captivated generations of readers. A Nancy Drew ghostwriter shares lessons learned while writing about the famous sleuth, how she used that training to write and sell an original series—and how you can use these techniques to make any story or book better, from narrative nonfiction to genre novels, for kids or adults.

Chris gave a shortened version of this talk at the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators conference in LA, and it was one of the highest ranked of 75 workshops. One attendee said, "Thank you for your session on plotting, Chris. I found it to be the most informative and helpful hour I spent at the conference." - Marcelle G.

Chris Eboch is the author of 12 books for young people. Her new series, *Haunted* (Aladdin/Simon & Schuster), is about a brother and sister who travel with a ghost hunter TV show. The series, for ages 8-12, debuted in August with two books, *The Ghost on the Stairs* and *The Riverboat Phantom*. Her other books include *Nancy Drew # 29*, *The Stolen Bones*, *Jesse Owens: Young Record Breaker* and *Milton Hershey: Young Chocolatier*, all for Aladdin, and *The Well of Sacrifice*, published by Clarion.

SHOW, DON'T TELL

Shirl Brainard

Saturday, January 16, 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

\$65.00 (includes lunch), Limit: 10 participants
SouthWest Writers Conference Room
3721 Morris NE, Ste A (NW corner of Comanche and Morris)

This workshop is designed to hone descriptive writing skills and explore your creativity by the use of visual material. You will describe your visual in 500 words maximum. We'll take 20 minutes per writing and 10 minutes per reading and peer comments. Free association of ideas is encouraged. This is a non-threatening, quick-brained, FUN hands-on workshop with NO critiques (and no grade!) Each participant will need paper, pen/pencil and a sense of humor.

This workshop (for writing) is an adaptation from a 6 week course, *Exploring Your Creativity*, which Shirl designed from the book, *The Courage to Create*, by psychologist Rollo May. She has taught this workshop for over 30 years.

Shirl Brainard is a retired design and color theory instructor from a community college. Just after she retired, her college textbook was published and is now in its 4th edition. Shirl writes non-fiction articles, her memoirs and is working on several fictional short stories.

Yearning



A Memoir
Sally Cisney Mann

Yearning: A Memoir

"Sally Cisney Mann tells a powerful, moving, and unforgettable story of tragedy and hope, loss and love, suffering and triumph. Hers is a life shaped by sweeping events - economic and social dislocation from the Great Depression, World War II, and the war in Southeast Asia. All students of war and the family should read this work, as well as those interested in the social history of women in America and in how we construct our individual identities when the world seems unwilling to cooperate. Her truly remarkable account, at once personal and universal, details her quest for stability - and for family. Readers will shed tears at all she endured, and they'll truly be 'in her corner' as she struggles to prevail over heartache."

Donald J. Mrozek
Professor and Director of Graduate Studies, Department of History,
Kansas State University
Author of *Air Power and the Ground War in Vietnam*

For more information, go to: www.outskirtspress.com/Yearning

Successes and Announcements

Connie Harrington's short story "My Summer Home" will be published in the Spring 2010 issue of *Beloit Fiction Journal*.

Joanne Bodin's poem *Desert Winds* was published in the Third Annual Desert Writer's Issue of *The Sun Runner: The Magazine of the Real California Desert*, 2009.

Michelle J. Holtby's book *Bipolar No More: A Memoir of Hope and Recovery* is now available on CD. The CD is \$25.00 for SouthWest Writers members and includes a booklet of resource information.

Lois Duncan's YA suspense novel, *Stranger With My Face*, was filmed by Lifetime and aired on the Lifetime Movie Network August 31 and September 1, 2009.

Keith Pyeatt's paranormal thriller *Dark Knowledge* has been published by Lyrical Press.

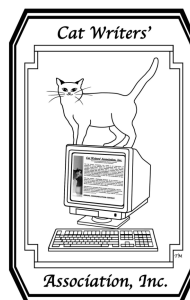
Kenneth Weene's book about trying to start over, *Widow's Walk*, has been published by All Things That Matter Press.

Several SouthWest Writers authors are finalists in the New Mexico Book Coop's 2009 New Mexico Book Award. **Keith Pyeatt's** paranormal novel *Struck* is a finalist in three categories: (gay/lesbian), (first book published by author), and (novel-mystery/suspense). **Joseph Shaw** also is a finalist in three categories with his book *To Honor the Dead* (novel-adventure or drama) and (novel-mystery/suspense) and (first book published by author). Other finalists are **Shirley Raye Redmond**, *Blind Tom: The Horse Who Helped Build the Great Railroad* (children's picture book) and *Rosemary's Glove* (novel-romance); **Jim Thompson**, *The Physics of Genesis* (religious book) and *The St. Nicholas Solution* (self-help book); **Rick Reichman**, *20 Things You Must Know to Write a Great Screenplay* (nonfiction); **Mark David Gerson**, *The Voice of the Muse: Answering the Call to Write* (self-help); **Jerry Davis**, *Master of None* (crafts/hobby/how-to); **Jonathan Miller**, *La Bajada Lawyer* (novel-adventure or drama); **Melody Groves**, *Border Ambush* (novel-historical fiction); **Gloria Hightower**, *The Shadow Mountain Murders* (novel-mystery/suspense); **Kirt Hickman**, *Worlds Asunder* (science fiction/fantasy), and **KJ Fraser**, *A Journey, A Reckoning, and A Miracle* (fiction, other). Winners will be announced November 20.

Mark David Gerson has been invited to participate in the 2010 Conscious Life Expo in Los Angeles February 12-15. He guest-hosted #writechat, a real-time online conversation about writing, on Twitter in October. This was Mark David's fourth time as guest host for the weekly event, which attracts more than 300 people each Sunday afternoon. He will host a real-time online Q&A about fiction writing on November 17 at 2 p.m. MT through the L.A.-based writers' commu-

nity site, www.writingspirit.com. He was also a guest on Unity.fm's Spiritual Coaching radio show on October 6. He will begin his monthly appearances on November 10 at 2 p.m. MT on www.unity.fm, and is scheduled on the second Tuesday of each month, for the full hour.

Visit <http://www.markdavidgerson.com/registernow.html> to see Mark David's upcoming Albuquerque workshops.



The 16th Annual **Cat Writers' Association (CWA) Conference** will be held November 19-21, 2009 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, White Plains, New York. This year it is held in conjunction with the Westchester Cat Show, November 21-22 in White Plains. For more information visit www.catwriters.org.

Frank Carden's novel, *No Life But This*, will have its thirty page war scene of Omaha Beach included in a war anthology by Diversion Press, TN. He just returned from a book signing for his novel, *The Prostitutes of Post Office Street*, at the Read It Again bookstore in Houston. He lives in Las Cruces.

Garcia Street Books and Bookworks present **Margaret Atwood** and **Graeme Gibson** on Monday November 16 at 7 p.m. at Woodward Hall, UNM, Albuquerque and on Tuesday November 17 at 7 p.m. at the Lensic Center for Performing Arts in Santa Fe. The authors will discuss their newly published books, *Year of the Flood* and *The Bedside Book of Beasts*. For tickets and information call 505-988-9126 ext 1150 or visit www.wildearthguardians.org.

SWW 2009 Fourth Quarter Writing Competition *Your most memorable character*

Send us an essay about the most memorable character in your life. Double-spaced, up to 500 words. Postmark deadline: Thursday, December 31. Please note if you grant publication permission. All entries \$10. Prizes: \$150/1st prize; \$50/2nd prize; \$25/3rd prize. Mail entries to SWW Quarterly Contest, 3721 Morris NE, Albuquerque, NM 87111.

Websites for Contests

<http://www.firstwriter.com/competitions/>
<http://www.writers-editors.com/Writers/Contests/contests.htm>
<http://www.placesforwriters.com/contests/>

Calls for Submissions

Bona Fide Books seeks literary essays about experiences living and working in the Carlsbad Caverns National Park for a collection about life in our parks, *Permanent Vacation: Living and Working in our National Parks*. Some go seeking commune with nature; others to escape. Diverse park experiences are desired. Although we enjoy tree-hugging epiphanies, we also want to read about day-to-day life, and the societal, environmental, and existential implications of life in the park. What happened there, and how did it influence your life? (Humor also welcome.) Writers will receive \$100 for their essay and one copy of the collection.

Deadline: January 5, 2010. Manuscripts should be typed, double-spaced, and 12 point Times New Roman or Courier font with standard formatting applied; word count is limited to 5,000. Send to submissions@bonafidebooks.com with "Permanent Vacation" and the title of work in the subject line. For more information, please go to www.bonafidebooks.com.

Entry deadline for inclusion in a new book, *Voices of New Mexico -- An Anthology for the Centennial Celebration of New Mexico* is December 31. The theme is "Voices of New Mexico." Essay submissions have to have some aspect of New Mexico, funny, history, biography, life in New Mexico, fiction, nonfiction. Entry information (\$10 fee per entry) is available at <http://nmbookcoop.com/Projects/page126/page126.html>

The Writer's Notebook, an online magazine for beginning poets and writers, seeks freelance writers. Debuting in September 2009, the magazine is published every two months. Visit <http://writersnotebook.homestead.com> for writers' guidelines. Payment is a byline and credit for your stories and artwork.

Coercion From My Muse

By Lola R. Eagle

There it is again – that pressure behind my shoulder blades that seems to be pushing me forward. Go. Do. Write. Publish.

But what to write about. There's the rub. My desk drawers are full of half-finished articles, stories, essays. What should I do with them?

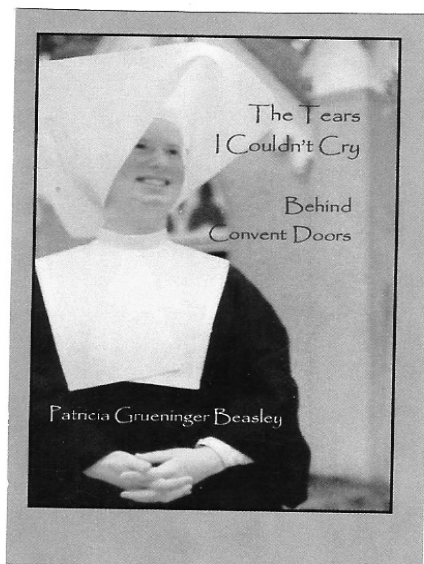
And those I do finish haven't been published. Marketing is not my favorite thing to do. In fact, I almost could say I hate it. So I put it off, and put it off again. If I do force myself finally to look up a market, write a cover letter, and send off a manuscript by U.S. Mail or even e-mail, I then go on about my business, trying to forget it. If a rejection comes back, I kind of tend to say, "To hell with it. Nobody wants it." I don't want to spend any more time on it. Like I said, I hate marketing!

Still, I feel this compulsion. Write! Write!

Shoot! I have all these great ideas for stories – fiction – romance – memoirs – comments. I start putting them down in words, and suddenly I no longer care. Because, after all, who cares? If I don't care, certainly no one else is going to care enough to read it.

So, please Ms. Muse, just leave me alone, Okay? I have nothing to say. Okay? I don't want to play. Okay?

Wait! Is that a poem I just began?



The Tears I Couldn't Cry, Behind Convent Doors

The true life story of Patricia Grueninger Beasley of Magdalena, NM, SWW member

"For 8,241 days I was SWALLOWED UP IN A CULTURE OF SECRECY ... I was stripped of my identity ... my loves – family, art, music, & nature – were snatched away ... I WAS ERASED"

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-Vickie Patik ... Emmy award winning screenwriter

For info, go to: www.authorhouse.com or call (575) 854-2222

Enchanting Winners: The 2009 Writing Contest

By John J. Candelaria

The 2009 Writing Contest opened with nuanced words from the President of SWW, "Madam Contest Chair, you'll find this task easy; with minimal effort success will be yours on what I call ***The Journey of Hope***."

The Contest Chair replied, "As you suggested, I spoke with ***Zipper the Cat***, had ***Lunch with Debbie***, then consulted with ***Trog and Ogel***. They all agreed I'll be ***Lost*** for a while as I realized experiences like these would make a great memoir book."

The Contest Chair began thinking about just the right title for this momentous opportunity. While ***Making the Bed***, words surged into her mind. Then she knew the book's title: ***Fatal Destiny***.

She realized her work as a lawyer, and toiling as contest chair could only be described by these words ***A Coin Has Two Faces***.

So ***The Stillness At the End of Wanting*** was disrupted as manuscripts began arriving at SWW: writers and poets seeking a place among the Enchanting Winners.

Like ***The Cochabamba Conspiracy***, writers forgot contest rules and the contest chair learned it was like ***Tracking Ghosts*** to orchestrate fixes.

Judges selected manuscripts with memorable and snappy titles, ***P2PC; Suspiciously Frugal: Minding Finances During the Great Recession***; and ***Confessions of a Transplant***.

One judge fantasized she was ***Falling Through the Crumbling Sky*** as she read about a ***Storykeeper*** who told stories of ***Fly Tying for Beginners***.

Another judge imagined he sat with the ***Turtles in Paradise*** and listened to the tale of ***Ester Bunny and Her Story of Jesus***, as they sang ***Sweet Glory***.

A third judge wrote, "I was overwhelmed by ***Sophie's Quest***, so I climbed ***Franklin's Ladder*** to ***Escape From Empire*** with ***Sir Frederick of Gildenstein*** as I was drenched by a ***Second Rain***."

A local judge commented on the connection between the ***Stories of a Divided West: A Mediator's View*** and ***A History of New Mexico Water Law***. She mused how ***Angel Hawk and the Ancient Anasazi*** would find ***A Touch of Deceit*** in those tales.

In a Blink, the same judge saw another compelling tie-in with stories of ***A River's Tales*** and the poem, ***Midnight on the Rio Grande-Sestina***. She said, "These manuscripts belong among Enchanting Winners."

The romance novel judge had a ***Broke Heart*** when the story ***To Love A Viscount*** ended with ***Shift Tab Kill***.

At the SWW office, the Contest Chair reviewed the judges selections; suddenly she was dazzled as the office manager strolled around with ***Josephine's Incredible Shoe & Black Pearls***. As he put on two ***Veils***, he shouted, "Let's collar those people ***Consorting with Mortality***." She mused, "Could this be one of ***The Lesser Species?***"

That night the Chair had a wild dream. She saw ***Pirates and Dinosaurs*** trying to ***Catch a Falling Star***, as they were killed by ***Stray Bullets*** from a drive-by. Later on, ***Reflecting on Dragons and Angels***, she awoke drenched in sweat, lit ***Candles for Ellie***, and shouted, "I've seen ***The Other Side of Courage***. Now I am ready for the annual banquet for I've learned to play ***The Game***, and ***It's Turkey Time***."

Now she knew her book could only be titled, ***The Gilded Cage, A Memoir***. And would open with these words, "It was a dark and stormy night..."



SouthWest Sage

SouthWest Writers

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Albuquerque, NM 87111

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SWWriters@juno.com

SouthWest Writers is a nonprofit organization
dedicated to encouraging and supporting all people
to express themselves through the written word.

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Billy Brown 505-401-8139

welbert53@aol.com

Screenwriting

G. Hathaway 505-249-7957

Nonfiction, Santa Fe

J. James Cunningham

grandpajimsf@peoplepc.com

Nonfiction, Valencia County

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skywriter@wildblue.net

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Abnerdontwanna@yahoo.com

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Rebecca Larivee 505.632-8086

goatvalley@gmail.com

Groups Seeking Members

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2nd and 4th Wednesdays at 5:30 p.m.

Tina Ortega 505-832-2513

Writers, Ink

Female, any genre

kglinski@monarchnm.com

Any Genre

Albuquerque Press Club

201 Highland Park Cir. SE

Second Tuesdays 7 pm

Samantha 505-401-1561

sclark.abq@earthlink.net

Mystery

www.croak-and-dagger.com

Critique Groups

Submit requests to

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Any Genre, Rio Rancho:

Alice Harpley and Bob Harpley

505-867-1408

riversedgebob@cableone.net

riograndema@cableone.net

Duke City Screenwriters

Every other Thursday,

Flying Star on 7th and Silver.

Marc Calderwood 505-897-6474

skatingkokopelli@hotmail.com

Land of Enchantment

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Second Saturdays at noon.

leranm.com

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Borders Books, ABQ Uptown

Every other Saturday 4 PM

Ron Harrison

harrison653@hotmail.com